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CHANGES IN THE MANDATED REPORTER LAW SINCE 2011

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MANDATED REPORTERS

The law requires people in certain professions or occupations that typically bring them into contact with children and families to report to either the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or law enforcement officials if, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they reasonably suspect that a child under age 18 has been abused or neglected ([CGS §§ 17a-101](#) and [-101a](#))

ISSUE

What changes has the legislature made to the law on mandated reporters of child abuse since 2011?

SUMMARY

The legislature has made several changes to the law since 2011, including making it a crime for (1) mandated reporters to fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or (2) someone to intentionally and unreasonably interfere with or prevent a mandated reporter from reporting such suspected abuse or neglect. It also expanded the list of mandated

reporters to include youth camp directors, youth athletic coaches, directors and trainers, all Department of Public Health (DPH) employees, and certain employees of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). We briefly summarize the current mandated reporter law and note the recent legislative changes below.

MANDATED REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE

The law requires people in certain professions or occupations that typically bring them into contact with children and families to report to either DCF or law enforcement officials if, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they reasonably suspect that a child under age 18 has been abused or neglected or is at imminent risk of serious harm ([CGS §§ 17a-101](#) and [-101a](#)).

"Abused" means that a child or youth (1) has been physically injured other than by accident; (2) has injuries that differ from what was reported; or (3) is in a condition that is the result of maltreatment, including sexual molestation or cruel punishment ([CGS § 46b-120 \(7\)](#)).

“Neglected” means a child who, for reasons other than poverty, (1) has been abandoned, (2) is being denied proper physical, educational, emotional, or moral care and attention, or (3) is being allowed to live in conditions harmful to his or her well-being ([CGS § 46b-120 \(6\)](#)).

A mandated reporter must make an oral report to DCF or a law enforcement agency no later than 12 hours after the reporter has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected, or placed in imminent risk of serious harm. The reporter may do so in person or by phone ([CGS § 17a-101b](#)).

A mandated reporter must submit a written report to DCF no later than 48 hours after making his or her oral report ([CGS § 17a-101c](#)).

CHANGES TO THE LAW SINCE 2011

False Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect

Falsely reporting child abuse or neglect is punishable by a fine of up to \$2,000, one year in prison, or both. Reports of child abuse or neglect typically are made to either DCF or local police. Anyone alleged to have made a false report must be referred to the Chief State’s Attorney’s office ([PA 12-82](#), codified as [CGS § 17a-101e](#)).

Preventing Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect

The law prohibits employers from firing, discriminating, or retaliating against an employee who reports child abuse or testifies in child abuse hearings. [PA 13-53](#), codified as [CGS § 17a-101e](#), also bars employers from hindering, preventing, or trying to prevent an employee from (1) reporting child abuse or neglect or (2) testifying in child abuse or neglect hearings. The attorney general may sue an employer who violates these provisions, and a court may impose a civil penalty or other equitable relief.

Interfering with a Mandated Reporter

[PA 13-297](#), codified as [CGS § 53-21](#), makes it the crime of risk of injury to a minor for someone to intentionally and unreasonably interfere with a mandated reporter carrying out his or her duty to report. The crime is a class D felony, punishable by a maximum fine of \$5,000, five years in prison, or both.

Failure to Report

[PA 13-297](#), codified as [CGS § 17a-101a](#), also makes it a class A misdemeanor, punishable by a maximum fine of \$2,000, one year in prison, or both, for mandated reporters to fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Such

reporters also must take part in an educational and training program. Under prior law, mandated reporters who failed to report suspected child abuse or neglect could be fined between \$500 and \$2,500.

MANDATED REPORTERS LIST ([CGS § 17A-101](#))

The following individuals must report allegations of child abuse and neglect in Connecticut:

- licensed physicians, including surgeons; hospital residents and interns, regardless of their licensure status; and physician assistants
- registered nurses and licensed practical nurses
- medical examiners
- dentists and dental hygienists
- mental health professionals, including psychologists, marital and family therapists, alcohol and drug counselors, social workers, and licensed professional counselors
- police officers
- juvenile or adult probation or parole officers
- members of the clergy
- pharmacists
- physical therapists
- optometrists
- chiropractors
- podiatrists
- licensed or certified emergency medical services providers
- sexual assault counselors and domestic violence counselors
- licensed foster parents

- anyone paid to care for a child in a licensed public or private facility or a licensed child care facility, including family day care homes
- DCF employees
- DPH employees ([PA 14-39](#))
- OEC employees responsible for licensing child care facilities or youth camps ([PA 14-39](#))
- the child advocate and her employees
- family relations counselors, trainees, or family services supervisors employed by the Judicial Department
- paid youth camp directors or assistant directors and anyone 18 or older who is a paid (1) youth athletics coach or director; (2) private youth sports organization, league, or team coach or director; or (3) administrator, faculty, or staff member, athletic coach, director, or trainer employed by a public or private higher education institute, but not student employees ([PA 14-186](#))
- school (elementary and secondary only) teachers and substitute teachers
- school administrators and superintendents
- school guidance counselors
- school paraprofessionals
- school coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics who are at least 18 years old and hold a State Board of Education coaching permit ([PA 14-186](#))
- any other person who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in (1) a public elementary or secondary school, under a contract with a local or regional board of education or (2) a private elementary or secondary school, under a contract with the school's supervisory agent ([CGS §§ 17a-101](#) and [53a-65](#)).

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